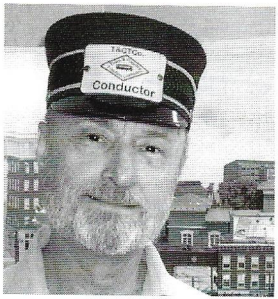
Fred Miller Earns MMR 336



Fred Miller avidly participates in his lifelong hobby of model railroading. Like most model railroad fans, he started as a kid with Lionel trains, but with a twist. Back in the late '30s his father ran converted O-27 equipment on a layout with outside third rail. By the 1950s, Fred's interest progressed to HO Scale modeling. Later he modeled in other scales, including Z, TT and, for a number of years, N scale. In high school he helped organize a model railroad club and much later formed a large N scale club in New Jersey. After retirement Fred returned to HO scale, this time modeling traction layouts and equipment on movable modules. His current modeling activity includes a series of interconnected HO-scale trolley dioramas based on the mid-1920s.

Over the years Fred has modeled, photographed and written about model railroading in all of the popular scales. Electronic controls, even custom-built computer-based, have been included in Fred's work. His recent HO traction modules are DCC equipped and computer controlled with lots of light and sound animation.

Fred's electronic and computer backgrounds were a natural for maintaining significant interest in personal computers. He started with the early "computer kits" in the mid '70s and after retirement from the corporate world he put more effort into his own program and product development and established Challenge Products to market his railroad-oriented game/simulations. His products include "RRSwitch" and "Freight Train and Trolley Time Challenge." These programs have all been advertised and reviewed in the model magazines.

After many years anchored in the New York City area Fred and his wife, an ordained Presbyterian minister, moved to Ridgewood, N.J., then Charlotte, N.C., Richmond, Va., and Fairfield, Conn. His last stop was a more permanent relocation back to Charlotte, N.C. All those moves allowed Fred to make friends in divisions of both the Mid-Eastern and Northeastern regions. He handled various offices in those divisions and now serves as clerk, webmaster and AP coordinator with the Carolina Southern Division of the MER.

Although a member of NMRA since 1966, it was not until the mid-1990s that he started to participate in Regional Model Contests and the AP program. Encouragement from Ray Bilodeau, John Johnson, Chuck Hladik and others from the MER started Fred on his journey into attaining the various AP Certificates. A visit to George Sellios' Franklin & South Manchester layout set the bar for Fred's urban scenes modeling. NMRA members attending NER and MER conventions will probably recall seeing one or more of Fred's HO traction dioramas. His HO traction modules were featured in an article published in the November 2002 issue of *Model Railroader*.

Fred has earned AP certificates in Electrical and Civil Engineering, Scenery, Structures, Motive Power, Association Volunteer and Author. Most of these certificates were based on his HO trolley modeling projects of the past ten years.